

## Resettlement or Livelihood Deprivation: The Travails of Victims of Gidan Salihu Resettlement Scheme Goronyo Local Government Area, Sokoto State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** It is commonly acknowledged that Government worldwide resettled people and communities (particularly those along river channels) from one geographical area to another on the basis of real, perceived and lingering threat, danger, catastrophe or epidemic. The contention of this paper is that despite the fact that most resettlement schemes are meant for the benefit of the community at large, the manner under which the resettlement scheme was conceived, planned and implemented failed to take into consideration the views/inputs of members of the community. The resultant effect leads to loss of livelihood, tension, violence and conflict in the affected communities and overall failure of the intended benefit of the scheme. This paper examines resettlement scheme at Gidan Salihu, Goronyo Local Government Area of Sokoto state focusing on the viability of the scheme and livelihood deprivation and challenges it places on the victims and the community. Data for this study was obtained via administration of questionnaire to those affected by the resettlement scheme selected via purposive and systematic sampling techniques as well as Focus Group Discussion with community leaders. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in the choice of the respondents and systematic sampling technique was used to select respondents to be administered with questionnaire at the interval of every 6<sup>th</sup> respondents. A total of 216 respondents were selected via systematic sampling technique. Key findings of the study reveals that majority of those affected by the resettlement scheme lost their farm lands, source of pasture and water for their livestock and compelling them to resides in an unfamiliar housing settings reflecting more of an urban setting than rural. Majority of the victims refused to relocate to the new environment stressing that it is better to continue to live under threat of hazard than to live in an area which will render them economically and socially vulnerable to poverty and hopelessness. The study concludes by recommending involvement of community members in decisions and policies affecting the livelihood of displaced communities.

**Keywords:** Resettlement, Livelihood, Deprivation, Goronyo, Sokoto State

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

People's movement in geographical space could be forced or voluntary in nature. History has shown that natural disasters in the forms of wars, flooding, earthquakes and famine have necessitated people and communities to embark on forceful migration, relocation or resettlement to an entirely new location [1-3]. In most cases Government often compelled citizens to move from their native environment to a new one based on several considerations revolving around safety from recurring hazards such as flooding, landslides and requirement of the area by government for developmental purposes as

in the case of Abuja. Various resettlement schemes were put in place by Government to ensure smooth resettlement of communities perceived to be under threat of recurring hazards in Nigeria such as the Bakolori, Shiroro Dam, Kainji Dam and Goronyo dam resettlement scheme [4-7]. Most of the aforementioned schemes were put in place to relocate people and communities so as to create space for construction of dams to harness water resources as well as safeguarding those communities in close proximity to the dams and the river channels so as to be free from dangers posed principally by flooding.

Sokoto state has been ravaged by flooding over the years. A typical example is the 2010 flooding caused by excessive rainfall and the collapse of the spill way of Goronyo dam which is a multi-purpose storage facility designed to store 942million cubic metres of water for irrigation and development of downstream areas from Goronyo to Argungu, covering an area of over 17,000 hectares. The dam was designed to provide an annual regulated flow of 425 million cubic metres to double the present rice cultivated by farmers from 40,000 to 80,000 hectares [8, 9]. The combination of collapsed spill ways and excessive rainfall resulted in massive flooding. The aftermath of the flooding led to loss of lives, properties and livelihoods. About 23 villages were submerged, 48 deaths were recorded and more than 35,000 people displaced. Some of the villages that were mostly affected by the flooding are, Gidan Bashara, Tsaro, Gidan Yar' Fara, Gidan Ayuba, Diboni, Sabon Garin Dole and Kagara.

To avert future occurrence of the colossal loss of lives, properties and livelihoods, the Sokoto state Government embarked on resettlement schemes to move villages close to the Rima river channels to higher ground. At the same time the State Government in conjunction with the Federal Government embarked on housing development in the planned resettled areas in order to ease housing challenges faced by victims of the 2010 flood. One of such areas where housing were built for the victims is Gidan Salihu about 15 kilometers away from Goronyo along the road leading to Goronyo town. Majority of those resettled at Gidan Salihu are from Sabon Garin Dole and Kagara villages in Goronyo Local Government area whose villages were destroyed during the 2010 flooding. A total of about 400 units of two bedroom flats were constructed in the area to house the resettled victims. Under normal circumstances this gesture should be a source of joy to the victims unfortunately the way and manner the resettlement scheme was conceived, planned and implemented failed to take into consideration the views/inputs of members of the community and their livelihood requirements. For instance, the victims were resettled in an area where they have no farmlands, sources of water for irrigation and entirely new settlement setting replica of urban housing than rural.. The resultant effect leads to loss of livelihoods, tension, violence and conflict in the affected communities and overall failure of the intended benefit of the scheme.

This study seeks to examine the travails of the resettled victims at Gidan Salihu, Goronyo Local Government and how it affects or shapes their adaptability and resilience and livelihood options.

The objectives of the study are to:

1. identify challenges confronting the victims in the new environment
2. assess victim's views and level of satisfaction with the new environment
3. gauge the degree of involvement of community members in decisions regarding the resettlement process

#### **Justification of the Study**

The essence of any Government policy is to enhance the living conditions of the citizens not to weaken or destroy it. Government over the years adopts a top-bottom approach to decision making where it singlehandedly decides for people and communities on what their requirements are or what they need to be provided with. This approach has failed in so many instances in achieving the desire goals and objectives of Government policies [10-12]. Incorporating the locals or community members in decision making regarding their livelihood will surely provide the Government with the much needed blue print of the desires, expectations, fears and grievances of communities and how they can effectively be addressed. It is on this premise that this study seeks to examine the travails of victims of Gidan Salihu Resettlement in order to bring to the fore the need for inclusivity in decision making so as ensure success of policy initiatives and outcomes in Nigeria.

#### **Study area**

Sabon Garin Salihu is located in Goronyo Local Government areas situated in the North-Eastern of Sokoto state. It is 52km away from Sokoto township and 15km away from Goronyo township. It is about 234 meters above sea level and has a population of about 1260 people based on projections of the 2006 population census. Goronyo Local Government Area covers a total land area of 1.704km<sup>2</sup>. Goronyo along with other districts that made up Goronyo Local Government Area lies between Latitude 13° 27' 11" North, and Longitude 5° 40' 35" East. Goronyo shares boundaries with Sabon Birni and Isa Local Government Areas to the North, Achida village to the East and to the West by Kware LGA. (See, Figure 1.1.)

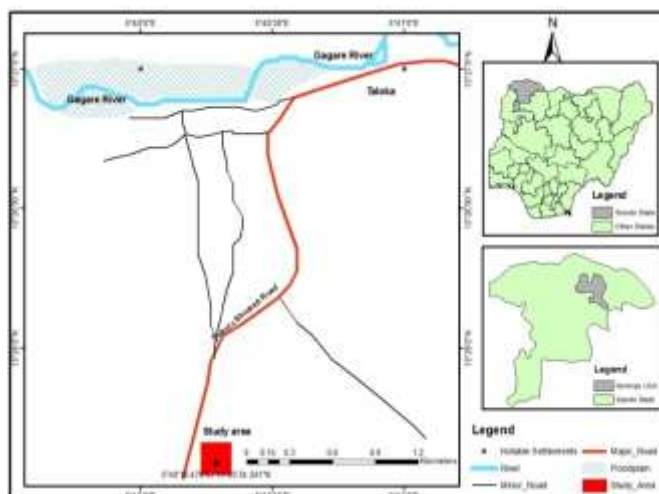


Fig-1: Sabon Garin Salihu (Map)

**METHODOLOGY**

Data for the study was obtained via primary and secondary sources. Primary data was obtained via administration of structured questionnaire to those affected by the resettlement scheme as well as Focus Group Discussion with community leaders. Secondary data was obtained through published document relating to the subject matter. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in the choice of the respondents (i.e. those affected with the resettlement) and systematic sampling technique was used to select respondents to be administered with questionnaire at the interval of every 6<sup>th</sup> respondents. A total of 216 respondents were selected via the systematic sampling technique.

Similarly, 12 community leaders comprising of Religious leaders, teachers, traditional authorities and Community elders were engaged in the Focus Group Discussion.

Inferential statistic was adopted in analyzing responses obtained from the field. Data were presented in the form of tables showing frequencies and percentages and following each table is the descriptive analysis of the findings. Data was analyzed within the SPSS environment.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Table 1: Socio-Economic Characteristics of respondents

Socio-Economic Characteristics	Frequency	%
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	207	96
Female	09	04
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 30 years	32	15
31-40 years	73	34
41-50 years	59	27
Above 50 years	52	24
<b>Major Occupation</b>		
Farming	188	87
Trading	19	09
Business	09	04
<b>Educational Background</b>		
Islamic	185	86
Primary	17	08
Secondary	12	05
Tertiary	02	01
<b>Duration of Stay at Former Settlement</b>		
Less than 10 years	43	20
10-20 years	98	45
Above 20 years	75	35
<b>Family Size</b>		
Less than 5	52	24
6-10	94	44
Above 10	70	32

Source: Fieldwork, 2015

Discussion in this section begins with the examination of the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. Sex distribution of the respondents indicates 96% males and 4% females. It should be noted that the society is predominantly patriarchal and that could be responsible for the dominance of the males or the females. Similarly, majority of the respondents (34%) are within the age bracket of 31-40 years while 27% and 24% were within the age brackets of 41-50 and above 50 years respectively. Occupationally, farming is the most dominant occupation with 87% while 9% and 4% engaged in trading and business respectively. In terms of educational background, 86% attended Islamic school, those with primary and secondary education accounts for 8% and 5% respectively. The dominance of Islamic education is based on the fact that majority of the inhabitant of the walled city are Muslims who are well devoted to the teaching of Islam. Baba [13] argues that the core north has a predominantly Muslim population and its long history of contact with Islam shaped its socio-economic and political framework long before colonisation by the British. Therefore, the introduction of Christianity, western education and colonial state structures by

missionaries and colonialists threatened an established social order that derived legitimacy from its linkages with Islam. This resulted in apathy for western education and preference for Islamic which is viewed as supreme. Investigation into length of stay of respondents shows that major 45% have been residing in the area for a period between 10-20 years and 35% for over 20 years. The implication here is that majority of the respondents have strong affinity with their area of residence through family ties and social kinship and have no other place they call home. With respect to family size, majority of the respondents (44%) have between 6-10 people in their household, 32% have above 10 people as members of household and 24% have less than five members of household. Similarly, going by the responses relating to family size, one can argue that the Government did not in any way consider family size in its decision to develop the resettlement housing. How can the 44% and 32% of the respondents (with 6-10 and above 10 family members) resettled comfortably into a 2 bedroom flat? Thus resettling respondents to a strange environment will not only evoke emotional stress and breakdown of kinship ties but also threat to livelihood opportunities.

**Table 2: Resettlement Issues**

	Frequency	%
<b>View about the Resettlement Scheme</b>		
Favourable to the community	11	05
Unfavourable to the Community	205	95
<b>Whether Respondents Objects to the Resettlement</b>		
Yes	173	80
No	43	20
<b>If yes in what ways</b>		
Going to court	00	00
Protest	121	70
Complain to Religious and Traditional leaders	37	21
Involvement of NGOs and CSOs	00	00
Others (Specify)	15	09

Source: Fieldwork, 2015

Investigation into the views of the respondent about the resettlement scheme shows that Majority of the sampled respondents (95%) view the exercise as unfavourable to the community. This is a huge percentage and it goes a long way in showing respondent's dissatisfaction with the proposed resettlement scheme in their locality. This level of dissatisfaction prompted the question on whether respondents show objection(s) of any sort to the resettlement. In this regard, majority of the respondents (80%) claimed they show objection while the remaining 20% claimed they do not object to the resettlement because they know it will be an exercise in futility and hence left everything in the hand of God. Furthermore, those who claimed they protested against the scheme where asked to clarify the nature of their protest. In this vein, 70% of the respondents stated that they partake in

peaceful protest and demonstration, 21% claimed they complain and register their displeasure with religious and traditional leaders both within and outside Sokoto state and 9% resort to complaining to politicians who they perceived as being close to the Government. It is important to note here that none of the respondents resort to going to court and contacting Non-state actors such as NGOs, Civil Society Advocates etc. mainly because of the perception that engaging government in litigation will not only be futile but will also have aftermath repercussions which may not augur well for the residents. It is also important to note that in Nigeria the 1978 Land Use Decree placed land under the control and subject to the disposition of the Governor. The Decree categorically states under Section 1 that:

*“All Lands are vested in the state Governor, on whose behalf and with whose express consent all grant of rights; interest in land would be made henceforth”*

The Decree went further to state that :

*“subject to the provisions of this Decree, all land comprised in the territory of each state in the Federation are hereby by vested in the Military Governor of that state and such land shall be held in trust administered for the use and common benefit of all Nigerians in accordance with the provision of the Decree” [14].*

By the above assertion, government is now in absolute control of land and its associated resources in Nigeria and individuals and organizations can now apply for land allocation from the government. On the other hands, the Decree empowers the government to take over land from individuals and organization by invoking the ‘Over-riding Public Interest Clause’. The relevant section in this regard is section 28 of the Decree. Section 28(1), provides that’

*“It shall be lawful for the Military Governor to revoke a right of occupancy for overriding public interest” [14].*

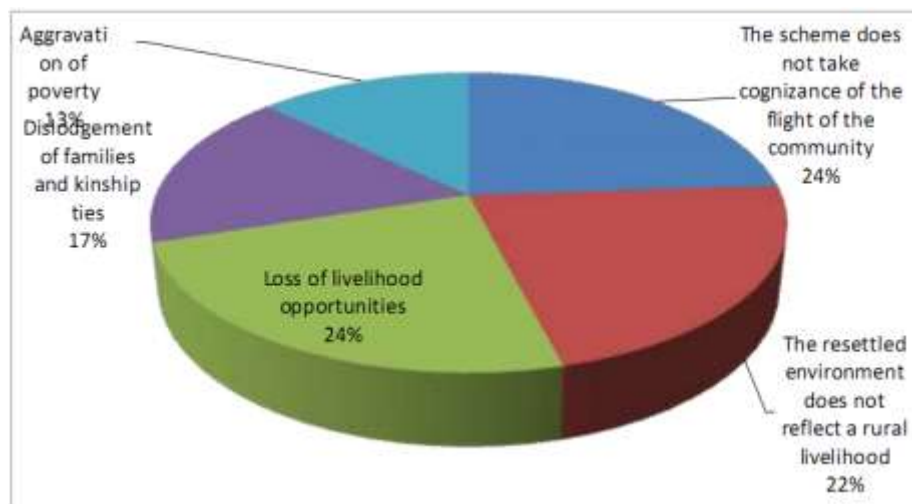
According to section 28(2) , over-riding public interest in the case of statutory right of occupancy means:

- a. The alienation by the occupier by assignment;

mortgage; transfer of possession; sublease or otherwise of any right of occupancy or part thereof, contrary to the provisions of this Decree or any regulations made thereunder.

- b. The requirement of the land by the Government of the state; in either case for public purposes within the state, or the requirement of land by the Government of the Federation for public purpose of the Federation.
- c. The requirement of the land for mining purposes or oil pipeline or for any purpose connected therewith.
- d. The requirement of the land for the purposes of laying it out into plots for allocations

The power vested by the Decree in the Governor will make it virtually impossible for the residents of the study area to win any court case as the Decree had clearly stated that Land Use Decree supercedes or claims supremacy above any other existing land legislations [14]. On the other hand Civil Society Organizations and NGOs are not very visible in most rural areas and there is lack of information about their existence and how they could intervene in cases like this. It is important to note that a vibrant Civil Society is important to the health of any society. Civil society can promote government accountability, strengthen the voice of and empower communities, and promote stronger linkages and transparency between states and their citizens. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) play a crucial service-delivery role in most countries; CSOs are often advocates for the most vulnerable members of society including the poor, women, children, the disabled, the elderly and minority groups [15].



**Fig-2: Reasons for objecting the resettlement Scheme**

Source: Fieldwork, 2015

Data in figure 2 revealed the reasons why most of the respondents objected to the resettlement scheme. For instance, 24% of the respondents claimed that the scheme does not take into cognizance the flight of the

community. By this assertion, community members felt marginalized in decision making regarding their flight and livelihood. Decision of this nature according to the outcome of the FGD shows that “ Community members

felt that Government decision is just imposed on them without seeking for their inputs on how to go about it and way out". According to them Government's presence in their community is zero in terms of infrastructural provision and support. Similar finding has been noted by Oyedipe, [17] and Sule, [18].

Similarly, another 24% claimed they objected to the resettlement because they will lose their livelihood opportunities. This study has shown that most of the respondents engaged in farming and their proximity to the Channel of River Rima enable them to engage in both rain fed and irrigation farming all through the year. Relocating them far away from source of water they use for farming, domestic use, fishing and animal rearing tantamount to taking over their entire means of livelihood. These communities are known for rice, onion, garlic, pepper, tomatoes and wheat productions serving the needs of the entire country.

Further analysis shows that 22% of the respondents assert that the proposed resettled environment does not reflect rural housing livelihood at all while 17% of the respondents were of the view that resettlement results in dislodgement of family and kinship ties. One common feature of rural neighborhood settings is that it encourages association and bond of

relationship, social cohesion and affinity and is deeply rooted among rural residents. By this assertion, a kind of social group emerged of elders meeting at designated point particularly at night. Similarly, the fact that rural neighborhood are often inhabited by members of the same family made family bond stronger and hence increase the resistance of dwellers to any form of resettlement. Furthermore, because of the affinity people have to their ancestral land, many rural dwellers find it difficult to relocate to new location. The devastating effect of the resettlement according to the respondents (13%) is it aggravates poverty level. In this instance the respondents felt that all Government is trying to do is to take away their means of sustenance without provision of alternatives and later on share it to politicians and the elites from the urban areas.

A detailed examination of the assertion of 22% of the respondents regarding the resettled environment and its unsuitability for rural livelihood, this study discovered that the assertion could be true based on the fact that Government built 500 resettlement housing units of 2 bedroom flats at Sabon Gidan Salihu (see Figure 3). The built houses were typical of urban setting based on their structural components, design as well as setting.



**Fig-3: Housing Estate built for resettled communities at Gidan Salihu, Goronyo, Local Government**  
(Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2015)

For instance, Hausa traditional housing design is associated with courtyard form concepts encircled by numerous rooms that facilitate the expansion to accommodate more inhabitants such as wives and children. According to Osasuna [17], the traditional house is rather a homestead comprising several huts in a walled compound. The compound usually has sleeping and living quarters for household members (and

extended family members in some cases), space for rearing of domestic animals. Courtyards are enclosed within the compounds, which also serve as playground for children and a Rhombus, a traditional foodstuff storage facility meant for storing agricultural produce. Thus, the compound is a complete environment for the physical and biological needs of the household (see Figure 4).



**Fig-4: A Typical Rural Housing in Rural Sokoto**

Source: Google Images, 2015

Furthermore, the planning concept involves the provision of open air space for injunction. Places are provided for storage of agricultural produce and rearing of animals within the house. The structure of the built houses does not reflect the setting above. Similarly, the nature of the houses built by the government must require artificial air conditioning to moderate indoor climate because the houses are built by blocks and concrete. Maintaining physiological comfort may be difficult. A typical rural housing was built to moderate climatic condition. The indigenous materials for construction in Hausa land involve four major materials namely: earth, timber, reeds, grasses, and stones [19]. The construction involved pear - shaped sun dried mud bricks that are moulded from the red laterite soil around the neighbourhood. The laterite soil has high fibre content, when skillfully mould, produces excellent materials for buildings' walls and roofs. Also, moulding the mud walls bricks involves mixing the laterite soil with water thoroughly. When properly dried are then laid in regular courses with points facing upwards method of construction). Egg-shaped units of Adobe which has been earth - plastered, are put together to create buildings given a monolithic appearance [17] buttressed. In the construction, the roofs structures in this zone are formed with small door space with little or no window openings which are usually achieved with the intention to eliminate the hot, dry and dusty air. The prevention is also applicable to bright day light and entry of air at night. Similarly, the location and small size of the window helps in curtailing the incursion of dust and flies. The construction of mud roofs involves split palm frond pieces which are laid on palm frond beams in herringbone fashion and plastered on both sides with mud. Plastering of the walls is made with mud containing a mixture of potash or juice derived from the locust bean. It could be noted that privacy of the family which is sacrosanct is missing in the new environment. Houses are built close to one another and without a fence for security (of family, agricultural produce and livestock) and privacy of the family. In a nut shell, respondents were not satisfied with the new environment and majority claimed they will sell the property and move elsewhere.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Under normal circumstances resettlement schemes were embarked upon to protect citizens from adverse weather or nature related conditions such as flooding and landslides. The broad aim of resettlement schemes globally is to better the livelihood opportunities of communities by safeguarding them from real or perceived recurring dangers. This study has shown that the Sabon Garin Gidan Salihu resettlement scheme endanger the livelihood of the communities involved rather than improving it. Going by the findings of this study, it is obvious that respondents were not pleased with the resolved of the government to resettlement them from the flood plain areas of River Rima to relatively higher ground thereby depriving them of their means of livelihoods (farming and rearing of animals). Top bottom decision approach of the government does not go down well with the respondents as majority of respondents felt that their views and aspirations were not considered at all by the Government. This indicates absence of inclusive and participatory governance. It is the contention of this paper that government's failure to listen to the yearnings and aspirations of communities affected by the resettlements is responsible for wrong decisions made by government regarding the entire resettlement exercise and the nature of the built resettled environment. This paper thus, recommends as follows:

1. Government should evolve inclusive governance, one that will carry communities along in Planning and implementation of government policies.
2. Environment where communities are to be resettled should be a replica of the community's livelihoods and culture. Anything short of this will make mockery of the entire exercise.
3. Civil Society Organizations and other Non-State actors should be engaged in the process of resettlement so as to serve as advocates for the vulnerable members of the community and also check the excesses of government.
4. Government should ensure regular maintenance of Dams and their spill-ways to avert collapse and subsequent flood disaster in the future.

5. Farmlands should be made available to resettled members of the community so as to ensure continuity of their livelihoods.

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